

PRESS RELEASE

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUBVENTION & BID SUPPORT SUBMITTED TO MINISTER

After industry consultation, following the publication last October of the report on 'UK Subvention Policy and Bid Support Practices for International Conferences', The Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) has put together a series of recommendations for consideration by John Penrose, MP, Minister for Tourism and other government and industry departments.

The recommendations, which identify specific actions for various stakeholders, will also be submitted to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, The Home Office Ministers, United Kingdom Trade & Investment (UKTI) and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events (APPG) as well as other government agencies and industry bodies.

The key recommendations are:

1. **The Events Industry** should continue to raise national and local government understanding of the benefits and direct and indirect value that accrues from hosting international conferences, business and cultural events in the UK.
2. **The Events Industry** should encourage greater national and local government commitment to provide in kind support for event bids, especially when the qualifying event is beneficial to economic growth, scientific and industrial advancement, inward investment, employment and exports, either nationally or in the host destination.
3. **The Tourism Unit at the Department of Culture, Media & Sport** should publish and disseminate across government departments, a Ministerial Support Initiative Paper to include the timely provision of support letters, assistance on bids and attendance at events.
4. **The National Tourism Agencies, supported by UKTI**, should develop, through a nationwide business tourism forum, a national bid support best practice paper to facilitate information sharing and identify local support across leading conference and event destinations.
5. **Tourism representative bodies** currently engaged in VAT reviews should include the potential of reduced rates of VAT for organisers of inbound international congresses and more generally on conference services and venue hire for international events.
6. **The UK Borders Agency** should introduce special event visas for attendees of business events and conferences where there are over 2,000 overseas delegates.

"Subvention and bid support is an area which can be addressed positively to make our industry more internationally competitive and these recommendations have been put together to this end," comments Michael Hirst, Chair of the BVEP.



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He added " A number of initiatives towards meeting many of the objectives set out in the recommendations are already underway. We shall report further in the Spring on what progress has been made".

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